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## SANITATION AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

A NOTED economist complains that in current discussions of social progress "our eyes are turned, not upon hopes and possibilities and positives, but rather upon despair, impossibilities, and negatives." Effectual progress depends upon positive ideas, and would we have our social theories pregnant for good, we must find for them a basis in positive ideas. It is, therefore, important that the social reformer and philosopher turn his eyes to the field of sanitation, where neither the specialist, the philosopher, nor the public has forsaken hopes, denied possibilities, nor abandoned positives. Of the achievements in this field the historian Lecky, writing his *Map of Life* at the very close of the nineteenth century, was able to state: "The triumphs of sanitary reform are perhaps the brightest page in the history of our century." Smallpox has been stamped out of every land where fanaticism or criminal neglect has not stayed the rescuing hand, plague has been put under control, typhoid abolished, diphtheria mastered, consumption explained and controlled, yellow fever driven even from the tropics. Whereas the savage dies at the rate of 60 to 100 in every 1,000, and suffers ravaging epidemics which periodically threaten the very existence of whole races, backward nations, such as Spain and Italy, lose but 30, while city rates in Germany and the United States are reduced to less than 20 in 1,000. The average age has advanced fifteen years in two generations. But not only has life's tenure lengthened, but life has been made more worth the living. Sicknes has decreased, air is purer, water cleaner, large classes of men have for the first time known the pleasures of health.

Not all is done, however. Squalor and filth and destitution still abound, and preventable diseases still number their victims by hundreds of thousands. Some cities are backward, some states are skeptical, some classes are obdurate; but what man has done man can do, and we know experimentally that the future may confidently be expected to see the total eradication

of these transmissible diseases, which now levy such heavy contributions upon social vitality. New York has practically stamped out smallpox, Mississippi can do it by applying vaccine. Vienna University can hardly find enough typhoid patients to teach medical students the symptoms of the disease. Why has Philadelphia thousands of cases to spare? Pennsylvania will shortly rescue itself from polluted streams and typhoid havoc, as it has shown England how to stamp out tuberculosis among cattle. Consumption among men can be detected and checked more easily than diphtheria, and state sanatoria dare to point to the time when it will be difficult for medical colleges to find bacilli of tuberculosis for analysis. The limits to sanitary progress are not to be sought in sanitary science, but in social theories; not in the paucity of remedies, but in the unwillingness to justify them theoretically and to pay for their application.

What relation has sanitation to problems of distribution? Does filth disappear or disease recede as a family or a class or a nation increases its monopoly power? Is the standard of life dependent upon health and the means to protect it? Yes, perhaps we are about to argue that the study of sanitary problems will help us better to understand monopoly force; that sanitary conditions offer a criterion of the standard of life; that the health of a class depends upon its share of monopoly returns from industry; that man's hold upon life and vitality is intimately bound up with theories and methods of distribution; that sanitary progress depends upon right theories of taxation; and that the saving of twenty thousand lives a year in Pennsylvania alone waits upon public appreciation of the true nature of monopoly and its earnings. It is certain that the thesis on public sanitation must put in the foreground diagrams showing the various differential and marginal advantages possessed by different factors in production. And this because sanitary science is a phase of social science rather than a branch of chemistry, medicine, or biology.

It is of such sanitary science that the historian speaks when he finds the high-water mark of the past century's achievements in the triumphs of sanitary reform. In England, Ireland, and

Scotland sanitation implies statesmanship. It is state medicine, not laboratory medicine, that has re-housed Britain's poor; it is the application of vaccine lymph and the governmental utilization of antitoxin that have robbed smallpox and diphtheria of their terrors. It is the use, the compulsory use, of tuberculin, and not its discovery, that has purified a meat supply. Lecky had in mind the sanitarian who used his art for the accomplishment of needed structural changes in society—science as hand-maid to statecraft.

No American historian would have paid such a tribute to the sanitarian. We are not yet in the habit of connecting sanitation and sociology. Discussion and responsibility are delegated to the physician, who, himself primarily a student of pathology and disease, tends to emphasize pills rather than public welfare. We laymen, on the other side, think, because the physician is the best possible agent, he makes a safe exclusive guardian of society's health. Councils, legislatures, and congresses pass measures and then turn over the execution of the social will to the physician. Deliberative assemblies have come to appoint public-health committees, but these regard their functions as primarily checks upon the vagaries of enthusiasts or perhaps as burdensome honors. Or perhaps, like the chairman of a public-health committee in the Pennsylvania legislature, they choose positions on such committees "because there ain't a d—— thing to do."

The danger in this excessive specialization is apparent, if the fundamental remedies, like the fundamental motives of sanitary science, lie outside the field of medical science and within that of social science. Legislation is futile unless administrative organs are provided to execute the will of the legislature. Executive officers can do little unless supported by the courts. The attitude of the courts depends, not upon the standards of the physicians, and of text-book writers upon bacteriology, but upon the standards and intelligence of the classes from which courts take their cue. The courts will not permanently administer laws which are opposed by those to whom they owe their existence. In the past the court-sustaining classes have not

been those which have technical knowledge of disease, but rather those which know less of germs and symptoms and prophylaxis than of luxuries and the pleasures of conspicuous consumption. The need is, therefore, in America, that the voting classes identify public-health work, not with diseases, which they do not understand, but with the advantages of cleanliness and health, which they can readily understand, because to these is attached a social, even a commercial, value. To that end it is important that we know the historical development of sanitation and its present relation to our theories of consumption and monopoly taxation.

Chronologically there have been seven clearly marked stages in the evolution of what we now call public-health administration. Each state and each city, if left to itself, passes through the same stages in its administration, even where a complete code is legislated, not evolved. To abridge the process is the professed aim of central governments today. But where a complete sanitary code is accepted by a newborn town as a condition to its incorporation, we still have the seven distinct motives represented.

The first period is that of racial tutelage, of pain economy, when the primary lessons of personal hygiene are learned. Through the distribution of plant and animal life, of heat and moisture, primitive man was forced to a nomadic life, and perforce enjoyed pure air, pure water, and pure soil. In his conflict with nature he learned to shun certain plants as poisonous, and to reject discolored and offensive water or meats. But when gregarious man settled in confined limits for definite and prolonged periods, nature could no longer perform the work of scavenger; sanitation must become conscious, and receive the sanction of law. The dead must be buried in Arabia, or embalmed along the Nile, offal removed and buried, lepers banished from camp or town, swine flesh avoided in Palestine, and all flesh eschewed in Buddha's realms. How costly were these lessons of community life we may judge from the stringency of the persisting codes among the Hindoos, or even the Jewish regulations as to intermarriage, kosher, etc. Agassiz was inter-

preting religious history when he said: "A natural law is as sacred as a moral principle." He might have said of this early period of sanitation, "Natural law is a potential moral principle," for then, as now, the unhealthful became the offensive, then the antisocial, finally the immoral. For example, we are at present tending to develop moral standards with reference to expectoration in public places, as we have succeeded in establishing the immorality of drunkenness.

The second stage is that of the introduction of sanitary appliances for the health and comfort of the tribute-taking classes. Carthage has her paved streets. Greece worships Hygeia and idolizes her devotees. Rome has paved streets, public sewers, extensive water-works, gem-bedecked public baths, and furnishes water more freely than any city of modern times, while the superintendency of water-works is allotted only to senators and honored officials. In the twelfth century Paris paves her streets, for the same reason that four centuries later London introduces water—to serve wealth and power. In Rome, Paris, London, as in Boston, Chicago, and Seattle, these first steps are due to another motive than desire to protect either public or private health. These public works, so far as they are due to other than property considerations, are primarily evidences of advancing standards of comfort, or perhaps concessions to a growing æsthetic sensitiveness. Constructed by the few to gratify their taste for cleanliness, ease, or show, the benefits accrue to society without reference to social standing, except that the poor may be permitted only a partial exploitation. In Rome we find the leisure-class motives isolated. To the patrician reveling in the possession of oriental loot, a place was necessary where he might parade the evidences of his prowess. The promenade must not remain unpassable after every shower, wherefore street-paving. The streets were cleaned because dirt and splendor, filthy passages and sweeping gold-braided togas, were incompatible. Compared with the perfumes of the East and the sweetness of costly olive oil, the exhalations from the human body were obnoxious; hence frequent appearance in the public bath became indispensable to social standing. Rome was

flooded with water for the same reason that the broad, wind-swept avenues of our large cities are cleaned three times as often as the narrow, sweltering, disease-breeding streets and alleys. Had we any way to give a silk dress to every workwoman, together with time to display it, we might be sure that the councilmen would demand the immediate renovation and constant sprinkling and sweeping of the narrow streets and alleys and asphalt everywhere.

The third period is that of commercial sanitation. This should have followed directly upon the second, but historically there was a period of two centuries "when Teutonic Europe was sleeping off its great debauch," when civilization was without the fundamental motives to sanitary improvement. The barbarian glutton found more primitive means of comparing his success with that of his neighbors than the promenade, and obtained greater satisfaction from wine and the sword than from oriental finery and clean garments. The ideals of Christian and pagan became direct obstacles to sanitary advancement. In fact, Holy Hieronymus, the monastic corporation, and the feudal lord combined to undo the sanitary progress of centuries of slow adaptation. The ascetic violated all the laws of personal hygiene, the monastery's ideal was inconsistent with public hygiene, and both glorified God by teaching submission to the pestilence. The feudal lord, on his part, thought first of the exigencies of defense, and constructed his castle with a view to herding together hosts of fighting warriors.

Europe made most bitter atonement for this disregard for the laws of health. Ravaging epidemics in the years 550, 1000, 1345-50, 1485, 1528, 1665, A. D., carried away millions, the Black Death alone, 1345-50, having cost China 13,000,000 lives, London 100,000, Venice a like number, Paris 50,000, and the Franciscan Friars of Germany 125,000. Lamprecht says these epidemics "were largely due to filth, but the superstition of the people attributed them to other causes." The repositories of the world's knowledge prevented Christian Europe from learning the lessons which blind followers of instinct, untutored and wild, would have learned from these disasters,

and thus filth became the medium of "dispensations of providence."

But, however welcome these evidences of divine wrath may have been to the zealot, they entailed unsufferable losses upon those classes of society which, in the breaking up of feudal institutions, stepped into the dominant position. I refer to the mercantile interests. By a strange coincidence, the first quarantine and the first street-cleaning in Germany date from the same year, 1348; the former in the foremost maritime city, Venice, the latter in the dominant guild town, Cologne. Thus at the same time began the reaction against the prevailing theory of the providential origin of plagues and the everlasting filth of the mediæval city. A well-defined philosophy soon arose to justify protection to commerce and garments and health. Erasmus voiced this new doctrine when he attributed the Sweating Sickness (1485, 1518) to the uncleanly habits of the English and the defective ventilation of their houses. More's *Utopia* had modern sanitary regulations, including isolation hospitals for transmissible diseases. Quarantine regulations in the Mediterranean preceded More, and by Montesquieu's time "Most countries in Europe have made exceedingly good quarantine regulations"—a policy then being introduced by the new American commercial states.

The fourth period is that of nuisance sanitation, the evolution by the courts of a nuisance law. This could not precede commercial sanitation, for so long as heaven sent disease, objection to noisome sights and odors was based on simple æsthetic motives. When earthly causes were premised, then the latitude of the courts could be greatly extended. Furthermore, it must be remembered that the same social differentiation which caused the filth theory of disease likewise strengthened the æsthetic and pecuniary motives to cleanliness. "Nuisance" presumes social strata. So long as every householder owns a goat, a pig-pen and slop barrel, a stable and a muddy, foul door-yard, there will be no calls upon the courts to declare this capital a public nuisance. When Bracton, therefore, in the fourteenth century, talks of nuisances, he generally means protruding roofs



or piles of rubbish, *i. e.*, obstructions; when Blackstone, in the eighteenth, mentions nuisances, the category has widened to include obnoxious animals, offensive trades, foul watercourses. The fundamental maxim of the nuisance law was then: "So use your own that you will not injure another." To it we have added nothing but definition of injurious acts or things. The multiplication of such acts followed the stratification of society and the division of labor. No differentiation, no nuisance, increasing differentiation, multiplication of nuisances. This is true whether we compare decade with decade, district with district, city with country, or one part of the city with another. In the so-called "slums" nothing short of an impassable or suffocating odor is considered a public nuisance, but in "residential districts" fruit stores, groceries, meat-markets, etc., apply deodorizers and purifiers constantly, and the streets are kept cleared of decomposing substances. The index at any particular time or place is the monopoly power possessed by the classes which live upon or pass over the various districts. As the term "residential district" has come to mean, not the district where the greatest number reside, but where the "best," the moneyed, the leisure classes consume the portion of their wealth devoted to domestic display, so freedom from nuisances follows the line of income, *i. e.*, the line of freedom from competition. If certain streets seem to disprove this statement, investigation will show that they are enjoying cleanliness, not because of demands made by tenants, but because of higher standards exacted by "up-town" people who pass frequently, or perhaps because the "up-town" people fear the result of adjacent uncleanness.

As the fourth period is marked by precautions against the unæsthetic or noisome, so the fifth stage develops precautions by "those who have" against the hidden dangers incident to neighboring lower standards of life, *i. e.*, against the slum. This stage the older civilization never knew. This type of sanitation could not develop until modern industry erected rookeries, immense factories, and retail establishments, the sweat-shop, creamery, and bakery. As soon as cities were divided into dis-

tricts according to industry and standard of life, it became possible to make inductive studies of health and sickness. Matthew Carey found, in 1794, that yellow fever chose seven-eighths of its victims among the poorer and less cleanly sections then about market and the river. He saw that wealth and culture were not immune because of any inherent or acquired grace, but that heaven, helping those who helped themselves, spared those whose standards of life made it possible to fly from the city into suburbs, or, if within the city, made cleanliness and drives and exercise, prompt expert medical attendance and isolation, possible. These conclusions need no modification because of the recent theory that mosquitos brought that same yellow pest. Boards of health were from Carey's time appointed, not for the sake of those sections that were supposed to cause epidemics, but for the benefit of the merchants, lawyers, women of the world, etc., who suffered discomfort and loss and interruptions, the leading motive of each being economic rather than hygienic. It is significant that the first vital statistics of the time were published by an economist to prove the financial loss entailed by epidemics, and that a great merchant established the first fever hospital and introduced trained nurses. This same simple economic motive has written stringent rules for the control of smallpox, typhoid, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and even consumption in nearly all communities, however small. But because based upon the interest of the few, the motive is intermittent in its action and waits upon crass and dramatic stimuli, hence we are conscious of these health rules only when danger is near and epidemic imminent.

So long as sanitation meant protection for those who had the greatest share in the returns from production, actual rather than potential dangers were treated. No great structural changes were to be expected. Had this leisure-class motive persevered, unaided by the philanthropic and socialistic elements of the last two stages, sanitary science would have stopped at the level of Philadelphia's former lethargy with reference to typhoid. The filtration plant never would have been built by the classes that can afford to buy spring water, nor could it have been delayed

so many years if typhoid had sought its victims chiefly from those classes. Philanthropy, in the sixth stage, taught the average man the value of his life and the possibility of enhancing its value by the expenditure of adequate corporate funds, thus ushering in the last and crowning epoch in the evolution of public sanitation, the socialistic, when the average man votes taxes to improve society's health.

Philanthropic sanitation was a product of the great, bloodless revolution that in England grew out of the terrible premises of the French Revolution. Adam Smith discovered labor to the English press; Ricardo fought the corn laws by discovering laborers; Malthus fixed the genus under an iron law of want; the arch-agitator Brougham argued the responsibility of Parliament—then the favored classes—for the betterment of labor's condition. Dickens and Reade were concrete and painted horrible pictures of London and England, their schools and prisons. Kingsley and the romance school prophesied a bright future when capital and labor should be one in motive and interest. The Poor Law Commission of 1832 furnished Carlyle with statistical material for soul-stirring impeachments of "the cold, dead, infinite injustice" of the existing methods of distribution. The Commission on the State of Health in Large Towns reported in 1842 that the English language lacked usable words to picture the filthy condition of the great towns, and urged parliamentary interference on behalf of the masses. The movement was aided by the spectacle of logicians like James Stuart Mill fluttering about and protesting man's inherent right to be filthy and sick and despised and self-loathing. In the words of Spencer, the only one of these individualists who has lived to see, without repenting, the folly of their opposition to sanitary regulations: "Bad drainage, overflowing cesspools, festering graveyards, impure water, and filth and humidity of low lodging-houses are effective means of eliminating the less fit." State altruism was challenged, too, by the chronic political decrrier of centralization, who as late as 1848 opposed the Public Health Act because it was "un-English and unconstitutional," "savoring of Cromwellism," "like a Russian ukase," and "calculated to deprive

local authorities of the independent action [or indifference] which was the glory of our Anglo-Saxon institutions, and like rickety children place them in the go-cart of central government." In the meantime private philanthropy had led the way and had constructed hospitals, model tenements, schools, and had educated the masses, who now demanded as rights what was originally proposed as charity. For fifty years England has acted upon the double principle that the boulevard owes to the alley protection against disease and unsanitary conditions, and that it is the right of both to demand protection against each other and themselves. But both principles are based upon the theory that there is an unearned increment upon which society has claims, that there is an unpaid increment which is due the so-called poor, and that sanitary administration offers a very direct and most efficacious means of reducing the inequality.

Socialistic sanitation is therefore necessarily constructive. The term is used instead of "democratic sanitation," because the former suggests activity, endeavor, construction, application of public funds to remedy social wrongs or deficiencies; while the latter might mean no more than common indifference. We know it in America as the power that condemns rookeries; restricts builders; regulates hours of labor and the age of laborers; builds hospitals, public baths and lodging-houses; sets aside great areas for parks and playgrounds; establishes sanatoria for consumptives; inspects factories and mines; defines dangerous trades, and prescribes territorial limits to those that pollute stream or air; compels vaccination; certifies physicians, dentists, druggists, barbers; quarantines the sick on land and sea—separating mother and child, or condemning property, if need be; rejects immigrants; enters lodging-houses, even dwellings, to determine their sanitary condition; prohibits the adulteration of foods and penalizes the sale, or offer for sale, of impure foods for man and beast; presumes to name certain fuel as unfit; spends millions for water-works, sewage farms, and the support of health departments. No one community has carried out a consistent and thorough program, but no community has failed to accept the principle that the public has the right and the duty

to use public funds to remove and to prevent disease or conditions that generate disease. We may differ in our theories of disease or in our belief as to the exact time and place where public funds shall be used, but we are of one mind that private wealth, private ignorance, private comfort, must be of secondary importance when and where public health is at stake. The theory is of the seventh stage—socialistic; the administration may be in the first—personal; second and first—personal and comfort; first to third—personal, comfort, commercial; first to fourth—personal, comfort, commercial, nuisance; first to fifth—personal, comfort, commercial, nuisance, anti-slum; first to sixth—personal, comfort, commercial, nuisance, anti-slum, philanthropic; or a combination of all with the motives of the last—socialistic. Emphasis will vary among and within states, but the variations in ideal are infinitely less than those in achievement. Such variations as there are will be found to follow industrial variations and those in social theories. In classifying the situation and the tendency in any particular community, the seven stages of sanitary development ought to be of service.

This brings us to the statement that the limits to sanitary progress are to be sought, not in sanitary science, but in social theories—that sanitary progress depends upon right theories of taxation. A complete health program presumes either a different distribution of our present appropriations or else a great increase in those appropriations. The divers obstacles to the former immediately suggest themselves; retrenchment is impracticable, even were it desirable. We must increase our revenues. To propose to levy upon wages, rents, interest, or earned profits would defeat the program at the outset. We must suggest a tax that will bring benefits without accompanying burdens, for we have not yet educated the majority of voters to a proper dollar-and-cent valuation of their own health and that of their dependents. If we cannot educate the voters to see that there is taxation which confers benefits without imposing burdens, we cannot carry out a complete sanitary program. If our economists cannot demonstrate to the simplest, candid mind that there is such a thing as unearned increment on both capital and labor,

we cannot disabuse that mind of the traditional belief that taxation means burden and sacrifice. Finally, if we cannot prove that monopolies, whether within or without so-called trusts, offer a practical means of taking social earnings for social good—without depriving any man of his deserts—we must abandon hope of protecting society adequately from present and future insanitary conditions.

To conclude, let us reinforce the statement that sanitary administration offers a very direct and most efficacious means of reducing the inequalities that even the most conservative capitalist will concede to be incident to our present system of distribution. The meanest wage-earner has already come to associate his health with his capital; his lodge, his creditors, and his insurance company are emphasizing that relation. None is so mean as not to wish a higher standard of life—nothing is easier to demonstrate than that wide and clean streets, playgrounds, hospitals, public baths, food, tenement, and factory inspection, help to raise his minimum standard with no sacrifice by himself. In no other field have conservative thinkers and communities taken such advanced ground; conversely, no other field offers so little theoretical opposition or so little prejudice. No other field of administration can demonstrate so quickly and so readily—on the platform or by actual tests—that there is taxation which benefits (without burdening) the majority. Finally, we here shift the emphasis in our discussions of principles of law from abstractions which only confuse without interesting the majority, or from dollars that serve to divide thinkers along artificial lines, to mankind and its truest betterment—to the real problems of social progress.

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